

# Blades Need More Fan Support To Beat Kamloops Tomorrow

The big question in hockey circles around town right now is "What gives with the Blades?"

Even the most hardy of the faithful few who trek to the arena for Junior Hockey games are beginning to shake their heads in wonder.

Some easily discouraged critics are dismissing the Vernon Juniors as chronic losers and turning in their cushions.

However, most of the Blades' staunch supporters are disappointed at their easily bust as a winning team but not to the point of throwing in the towel.

The amazing Blades, currently supporting an unblemished record, they haven't won a game in nine starts, are quite paradoxical. They always leave their fans with the impression that "they could have won if only . . ."

The Blades have shown themselves quite capable of playing the best teams in the Okanagan Junior League to a standstill—

they demonstrated this in two home games last weekend.

The big hitch develops when even the die hard supporters have to admit that there are also times when glaring goofs pave the way to yet another defeat.

There are always the people who are ready to plunge in with the usual bally-ho about lack of morale, and the usual gripes.

Probably the biggest trouble with the Blades—particularly in their home games—is the lack of bodies on the seats of the Civic Arena.

Playing to a collection of echoes and empty spaces isn't exactly calculated to give the players the mental lift needed to change them into a winning unit.

The thread dividing the Blades from the winning circle is thin and easily broken, if the right force is applied—say about 1,000 or so loudly enthusiastic supporters Friday night.

Kamloops Kraft Kings hit

town for a game at 8:30. The Hub City boys are not noted for their willingness to lie down and absorb a beating yet, Blades had this feat nearly accomplished when the roof caved in on them at the last meeting between the two.

Blades as usual will give it everything they have—a strictly 100 per cent effort. They'll also have their fingers crossed that nobody is going to goof with 15 seconds to go in this game.

Personnel wise, Blades are slowly building into a strong club, lacking only a few experienced players for the depth needed for a solid contender.

In goalie Norm Schiman, they have a netminder who could probably play anywhere in the league. The agile Schiman has an average of nearly 40 saves per game. Generally goals that elude his grasp are unsavable. The wonder is that he manages to turn aside as many as he does.

On defence, Quesnel import Gil Morrow along with Gord Clarke and Scott Smith form the nucleus of a solid Blue line squad.

Up front the addition of speedster Ivan Melanoski to the forward line has sparked additional fan interest. The rocketing winger is a colorful spearhead on the attack—and can score the needed goals as well.

Dale Sorochnik and Bob Stein, the Veterans of the Vernon Junior team, are a pair of old reliables when it comes to goal scoring.

With the return of Marvin Maier to the Vernon fold, Vernon can mount a varied offence.

Backed up by freshmen Vern Colley, Rich Reilly, Maurice Wernicke, and other players who are being worked into the team, Blades attack has been producing more consistently over the last few games.

As one desperate fan put it: "Nothing else seems to work—let's see if a little support will get them winning."

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